

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin

chapter 14

The Regressed Son of a Duke is an Assassin Chapter 14: The Emperor's Tour (1)

Morning dawned.

The sky was a deep, blood-red hue, unusual for the early hours, yet there was no other term to describe it.

Something felt off today, as if waking up with a hangover from the previous night's indulgences.

Well, I did indeed have quite the evening.

I checked the state of Keyram, which I had hidden under my pillow.

[.....]

He was fast asleep.

It seems both he and I, after last night's tumult, managed to sleep with our legs stretched out in relief.

I must have been out of my mind.

To use 'Demonic Sword Manifestation' just to catch a mere demon beast, and even deployed the Mist Sword secret technique on top of that.

It's fortunate I had consumed some of the mana from those beasts; a month earlier, my organs and blood vessels might have burst from exertion.

I had completely succumbed to the temptation of the perverse demon sword.

– Murmurs and noise

Outside was noisy, probably due to last night's events.

In my hasty retreat, I had discarded the Death Worm's carcass, unintentionally creating quite a mess.

Ah, now that I think about it, what a waste?

To have caught such a valuable high-class demon beast and not taste its blood even once.

By now, it must have turned into indistinguishable ashes.

"Oh? Are you awake, young master?"

Emily entered the tent, carrying a bundle of ingredients.

"Did you exercise a lot yesterday? You were sleeping soundly, almost snoring."

"Never mind that. It's quite loud outside; what happened?"

Emily, as if waiting for this, burst out with an exclamation.

"You wouldn't believe it! Last night, near the entrance to the [Limea Valley](#), a corpse of a high-class demon beast was discovered! It's been quite a while since a high-class demon beast appeared near the garrison, so now all the knights are busy double-checking the defense installations."

"Anything else?"

"What do you mean?"

"Anything else, apart from the high-class demon beast?"

Caught off guard by my nonchalant demeanor, Emily stumbled over her words.

"Well, that is... I didn't hear anything else. Just the discovery of the high-class demon beast...."

"So you're saying all you know is about the corpse of the high-class demon beast?"

"...Yes."

“Alright then.”

It seems like that’s the only news that had spread among the knights.

Although some knights, including the duke, had seen me, I managed to conceal my true appearance using the secret technique (Dark Mist 1st Form: Camouflage), so no one should know it was me.

The issue was whether others who recognized the technique knew it was me. For now, I would have to wait and monitor the situation.

“Is young master Sian here? It’s Knight Yulken.”

Yulken’s voice came from outside the tent.

“Come in.”

Yulken entered, and by the sound of it, several other knights were with him.

They’re not here for regular inspection, then what’s the matter?

“What is it?”

“The duke commanded me to escort you to him. Would you accompany us?”

“May I know the reason?”

“It’s regarding the visit from the royal family scheduled for the afternoon. His Grace seems to have matters to discuss with you regarding that.”

So it’s about the emperor’s tour.

Well, as his son, I suppose I have to play my part.

“Understood. I’ll come now.”

After discreetly tucking Keyram under the pillow, I followed Yulken out.

The garrison was as big as a village, and the duke’s residence was located right at the center.

It is a strategic position for rapid communication, and my father rarely leaves his quarters unless it is necessary.

After passing through the rigidly guarded knights, I entered the tent where my father was working.

He saw me and gestured for me to sit down.

“How is life on the frontlines?”

“Every day, I am learning much. I resolve to become someone useful to this place.”

“Good, I’m proud that you are holding up better than expected. If you ever want to return, feel free to say so.”

I bowed slightly, showing gratitude towards his kindness.

Of course, I had no intention of leaving early.

At the very least, I plan to continue living on the frontlines until I’m eleven years old and ready to enter the [Royal Academy](#).

“Let’s end this topic here. Do you know who will be visiting today?”

“I’ve vaguely heard about the emperor’s and the royal family’s visit being scheduled.”

“Yes. The sovereign of the great Ushif Empire, ‘Emperor Dione’, is scheduled to tour the frontline today. Accordingly, there’s a favor I’d like to ask of you today.”

“A favor, you say?”

My father seemed more relaxed today, which was unusual for him. I had a rough idea what it might be.

As his son, I should present myself well. I heard that I’ve become quite a celebrity among the nobility of the empire.

They’re talking about the fifth son of the Vert household, how he’s already on the frontlines, and hunting down demon beasts with knights – pointless rumors swirling among the nobility. Frankly, these talks aren’t to my benefit.

Isn’t it obvious?

In a world where nobles thrive on envy and jealousy, I'm just fodder for their gossip.

The rumors about how the family will be inherited by a different child, or how a child of questionable lineage desperate to look good... Tiring to even think about.

For my father, having no other sons around, I will be kept by his side today to assist with the emperor's tour.

"Do you know about the empire's fifth princess?"

"...?"

Why is he bringing up the fifth princess out of the blue?

"The fifth princess... you mean?"

Hmm... Speaking of the fifth princess of the empire at this time... She's the ill-fated princess, isn't she? Her name was, if I remember correctly...

"Are you referring to 'Arin Severus', Your grace?"

"That's right. She's of the same age as you, the youngest in the royal family. She too will be joining the scheduled tour today."

It's interesting but not concerning. Whether the emperor comes or his daughter, it's not my business. However, since the duke mentioned her without a reason, it meant something was off—I felt a premonition.

"Will you take care of young Arin today?"

"Pardon?"

Take care of what? Escort? Serve?

To be honest, neither appeals to me.

"There's no need to be surprised. Just keep each other company and socialize. You will meet again when you enter the academy next year, won't you? It's beneficial to nurture a relationship with the royal family. It won't be for long, but I hope you two develop a good rapport."

Even more bothersome.

It's practically an escort service.

Why should I play such a role for some arrogant young girl?

Especially the ill-fated princess?

I could understand my father's intention for connecting with the royal family members.

But choosing her as the contact was a mistake.

Arin Severus is not someone I should get close to but rather someone I must distance myself from.

Currently, no one knows.

That princess is destined to become a scapegoat in a few years during the empire's civil war!

"Your Grace, I will try my best to fulfill your request, as inadequate as I may be."

What use is it to lament a future only I know?

For now, I'll just agree to do it.

"Thank you. We'll meet again when the royal family arrives. You may leave now."

I bowed once more and turned around.

Until I left the tent, my father watched my back with a scrutinizing gaze.

It was as if he was comparing some unknown variable, with a glint of suspicion in his eyes.

Indeed, should I say "father"?

Everything and everyone is a suspect to him.

Even if it's his own son...

I stepped outside with an inscrutable smile on my face.

* * *

The massive stone wall that borders Belias and the frontlines.

What seems to be simple rock is actually imbued with a high-level magic barrier.

At the heart of it lies a single gate, the sole entry point to the frontlines for the entire continent.

Inside the gate, the Duke of Vert and several guardian knights were standing by.

Their solemn expressions and strict postures were clear as they awaited the arrival of dignitaries.

-Bwoo-woo!

“His Majesty the Emperor arrives!”

With a resounding horn and a knight’s shout, the group appeared.

The Emperor of the Ushif Empire, ‘Dione Severus’, revealed his dignified presence.

For an occasion such as this, he was armed and ready for immediate combat.

As the emperor dismounted at the gate, the waiting Duke Vert knelt on one knee.

“I am Willius Vert, Lord of Belias. It is an honor to see Your Majesty!”

“Always working hard, Willius! There’s no need for formality between us.”

Regardless of their titles, the relation between the emperor and the duke was deep.

Since their time at the Royal Academy, their friendship was well known, with the emperor even openly declaring Duke Vert as the most trusted noble.

As the two exchanged pleasantries, the emperor’s gaze turned to me.

“Ah, to think that such a bright sprout lies within this dark and despairing place.”

Recognizing he was referring to me, I composedly stepped forward and bowed.

“An honor to meet Your Majesty! I am Sian Vert, youngest of the [Duke Vert's](#) household.”

The emperor seemed fascinated, as if admiring something extraordinary.

“The rumors hold true. Such a young lad enduring these harsh conditions. Your offspring truly are distinct, Willius.”

“Your praise is too kind, Your Majesty. As a father, I am simply ashamed.”

“I also have someone I wish to introduce to you.”

The emperor glanced back, and as expected, someone alighted from the carriage.

A girl of similar age with deep silver hair and pale skin stepped out. No need for introductions; I knew who she was.

“This is the fifth princess of the Ushif Empire, Arin Severus.”

It was the same Arin princess from before, scheduled to join us today.

In my previous life, I couldn't care less about the emperor's visit as I was cooped up in the manor, but it was odd that she was here instead of the crown prince who usually would accompany.

Had the entire royal family fallen ill?

As I pondered carelessly, our eyes met.

Why do people consider a child childish?

It's because even with attempts to the contrary, their feelings are transparent. The same applies to a princess.

Even in passing, I sensed her thoughts.

“...?”

Is she... feeling envious of me?

(To be continued)